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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 23rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MUNTASSER (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

later: Ms. GOICOCHEA ESTENOZ (Cuba)
(Vice-Chairman)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 107: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 108: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued)

First reading (continued)

Section 18. Centre for Science and Technology for Development

Section 19. United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

Section 20. United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations

Section 21. Social development and humanitarian affairs

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 107: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued) (A/46/6/Rev.1, A/46/7)

AGENDA ITEM 108: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued) (A/46/16 and Add.1, A/46/173, A/46/330)

First reading (continued)

1. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), replying to questions raised at previous meetings of the Committee, said that the United States representative had asked, during the discussion of section 11, how many staff would be attending the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992. The answer to that question would be provided in writing but, for the record, it was anticipated that, subject to agreement with the host country, the following staff would attend: 30 from the secretariat of the Conference; 49 from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); 246 from the Department of Conference Services; 77 from the Office of General Services; 2 from the Office of Legal Affairs; and 36 from the Office of the Secretary-General, making a total of 440 staff altogether.

2. During the consideration of section 14, the United States representative had asked about the level of resources allocated for technical assistance through the specialized agencies. Information on that subject was available, in scattered form, in the report of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation on Operational Activities for Development (A/46/206) and the addenda thereto. That information would be presented in a more convenient form before the informal consultations on the proposed programme budget if time allowed.

Section 18: Centre for Science and Technology for Development

3. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that there appeared to be a paradox between the importance of science and technology for the economic development of developing countries, one of the five priority areas for the proposed programme budget, and the very modest level of resources envisaged for the Centre for Science and Technology for Development. The proposals had, however, been drawn up within an existing framework. Even when there was a global priority that would justify an increase in resources, the Secretariat still needed a mandate from Member States to provide for increased activities. There had been no such mandate in the case of section 18, although the question of science and technology for development had been discussed in the Secretariat and intergovernmental bodies and reorganization was on the agenda.

4. On a separate point, the post of Assistant Secretary-General was retained under section 18 although it was currently vacant.

5. Mr. CLAVIJO (Colombia), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, said that those members of the Group which were members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) had already indicated their view that the estimates did not properly reflect the priority accorded to science and technology for development in the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade and had drawn attention to the fact that section 18 was one of only two budget sections which showed a relative decrease in resources and under which little help was expected from donor countries in the form of extrabudgetary funds. The Centre for Science and Technology for Development had to expect an increase in its workload and it would clearly have to be strengthened in the near future. It should, therefore, at least be allowed to retain the small amounts of $50,000 and $33,200 by which the budget proposals and the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) would reduce its resources. Those resources could be devoted to subprogramme 1 and used, in particular, to reinforce the Centre's support for the scientific and technological activities of the regional commissions, thus helping to fill the gap between the Centre and countries which received technical assistance. That would bring tangible benefits and revive interest in a crucial area of development through the United Nations system.

6. Mr. RAE (India) said that his delegation attached great importance to the work of the Centre and could not accept the proposed negative rate of real growth in its resources. Whatever differences of opinion existed about science and technology for development, all were agreed that the Centre needed to be strengthened. It should therefore be provided with adequate resources. In particular, his delegation agreed with the suggestion by the representative of Colombia that the proposed reductions in its resources should be reallocated to subprogramme 1 to help to strengthen the endogenous capacity of developing countries.

7. Mr. ONWUALIA (Nigeria) said that his delegation also attached great importance to section 18, given the need to transfer technology to developing countries. It had already, in its general statement on the proposed programme budget, expressed regret at the negative rate of real growth under that section. It had expected a positive rate of real growth in an area of such high priority for the development of developing countries and would like some explanation from the Secretariat as to why its needs had been neglected. He would revert to the subject in the informal consultations on the budget proposals.

8. Mr. TANG Guangting (China) said that the Centre was the only body in the United Nations system that provided policy guidance and coordination in the use of science and technology for development. The Centre had many achievements to its credit and had won praise from many developing countries since its establishment in 1979. Because section 18 was important for the economic progress of developing countries, his delegation regretted the proposed negative rate of real growth of 0.6 per cent and found it hard to understand why other objects of expenditure which did not have priority were

(Mr. Tang Guangting, China)

to receive big increases in their resources. It believed that the spirit of the Vienna Programme of Action on Science and Technology for Development was still needed in view of the current condition of developing countries and the obvious importance of their further development. The estimate for section 18 was clearly inadequate. His delegation hoped that the General Assembly would study the problem in depth and come to a wise decision on it.

9. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the recommendation of CPC on section 18, as contained in paragraph 270 of its report (A/46/16).

10. It was so decided.

11. The recommendation of the Advisory Committee for an appropriation in the amount of $4,918,600 under section 18 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 was approved in first reading, on the understanding that the issues raised in connection with section 18 would be considered in informal consultations and any necessary adjustments made.

Section 19: United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

12. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that, in addition to the deletion from the estimates of the $4,200 which had been inadvertently retained to provide for representatives of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) to attend meetings of the Commission on Human Settlements, the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee in chapter I of its report (A/46/7), as applied to section 19, resulted in reductions totalling a further $168,800. In paragraph 19.4 of its report, the Advisory Committee recommended acceptance of the proposal for the conversion of one P-2 and 11 Local level temporary posts to established posts because they were necessary for the functioning of the Centre and could no longer be regarded as temporary. With regard to the proposed use of general temporary assistance resources to fund continuous posts, a question raised in paragraph 19.5 of its report, the Advisory Committee had been informed that the situation at the Centre would be brought into line with current procedure.

13. Ms. BERENGUER (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination) said that CPC recommended approval of the programme narrative of section 19 and the deletion of the low priority designation given to recurrent publications under subprogramme 8 (A/46/6/Rev.1, para. 19.18.1 (a)).

14. Mr. COHEN (United States of America) said that his delegation was concerned by the reference in the activities under subprogramme 6 to the development of computer software for the selection of refuse-collection vehicles in developing countries (A/46/6/Rev.1, para. 19.16.1 (b)). The use of computer software to disseminate such data appeared to be a gross misuse of the most inappropriate technology available. His delegation had raised the

(Mr. Cohen, United States)

issue at the latest meeting of CPC and had been informed that the reference was to the end result of a project that had lasted many years at very high cost. It would like to have full details of the programme as soon as possible, including, in particular, its duration, the total cost to date, when some results could be expected and, most importantly, the exact figure in dollars for projected expenditure on it during the biennium.

15. Mr. SIKKANDER (Sri Lanka) said that his country attached great importance to the activities of the Centre for Human Settlements, from which it had benefited greatly. His delegation therefore agreed entirely with the provision of resources for the Centre and with the recommendation of the Advisory Committee in paragraph 19.4 of its report.

16. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) said he wished to comment on some aspects of section 19 which illustrated more general issues. The first was the practice of making conservative estimates for extrabudgetary resources, a matter on which the Advisory Committee had commented in chapter I of its report. A comparison of the original estimates for section 19 in the biennium 1990-1991 with the revised figures for the same biennium given in the current proposed programme budget showed that the amount had increased from $50 million to $78 million. It was also worth noting the relative levels of regular budget and extrabudgetary resources in section 19, not because it was a matter for concern but because it illustrated the fact that extrabudgetary resources were not necessarily less reliable - indeed in some respects they appeared to be more reliable - than resources provided out of assessed contributions.

17. With regard to the programme of work of the Centre for Human Settlements, the new presentation clearly showed the volume of published material and prompted questions about the coordination of such output. For example, there was a reference to a publication on a training module on women and sustainable development (para. 19.11.2 (b)), for which provision might also be expected elsewhere in the proposed programme budget, and another reference to a publication on natural-disaster reduction (para. 19.18.1 (b)), without any further definition. His delegation did not oppose the programme of work, but it believed that the general question of coordinating and rationalizing United Nations publications needed to be reviewed, as a general issue, in the resolution to be adopted by the Fifth Committee on the proposed programme budget.

18. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the issue raised by the United States representative was an example of how the limited transparency of budget proposals could invite criticism of what were quite legitimate activities. The point made by the United Kingdom representative about the difference between the estimated and actual expenditure of extrabudgetary resources under section 19 in the biennium 1990-1991 was not new; the difference was indeed striking. It could be attributed to the tendency of programme managers to make conservative estimates for extrabudgetary resources when presenting their requirements,

(Mr. Baudot)

even though such resources were, indeed, often more reliable than those which were dependent on assessed contributions. With regard to the question of publications, the United Kingdom representative was quite right. The question of more systematic control over the quality and coordination of United Nations publications was to be addressed by the Publications Board. As yet, the Organization's ability to manage its funds centrally was unfortunately not matched by its control over publications policy.

19. Mr. COHEN (United States of America) said that his statement had not been concerned with the transparency of the budget process, but with the fact that there was no immediately apparent case for the activity which he had questioned. His delegation still wished to have the information he had requested.

20. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the conclusions and recommendations of CPC on section 19, as contained in paragraphs 276 and 277 of its report (A/46/16).

21. It was so decided.

22. The recommendation of the Advisory Committee fpr am appropriation in the amount of $11,999,400 under section 19 for the biennium 1992-1993 was approved in first reading, on the understanding that the issues raised in connection with section 19 would be considered in informal consultations and any necessary adjustments made.

Section 20: United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations

23. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the activities programmed under section 20 of the proposed programme budget would be implemented both by the Centre on Transnational Corporations and by its joint units with the five regional commissions. The Secretary-General was not presenting separate budgets for the Centre and the joint units because the programme was an integrated one and because an effort was being made to reduce the level of detail in the proposed programme budget.

24. The activities proposed in relation to the environment fell within one of the five broad priorities identified by the General Assembly. The reclassifications proposed by the Secretary-General had been formulated in accordance with the proper procedures, with due regard for the relationship between the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) and the Programme Planning and Budget Division.

25. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that, as indicated in paragraph 20.4 of its report (A/46/7), the Advisory Committee had been informed that not all the joint units at the regional commissions were performing satisfactorily. The Advisory Committee believed that there was a need for the secretariats of the

regional commissions to identify very clearly the role of the joint units in support of environmental programmes.

26. As noted in paragraph 20.5 of its report, the Advisory Committee had no objection to the proposed upgrading of the post of Chief, Accounting Unit, but did not support the proposal to reclassify the post of Chief, Environmental Unit, and the General Service post of Managing Editor, CTC Reporter Magazine. The Advisory Committee believed that the results of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development might give an indication of how the nature of the work of the Environmental Unit would change. That could then be taken into account in considering the proposed reclassification.

27. The Advisory Committee's recommendations in chapter I of its report, as applied to section 20, would result in reductions totalling $89,600.

28. Ms. BERENGUER (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination) said that CPC recommended the approval of the programme narrative of section 20 of the proposed programme budget.

29. Mr. BENNETT (United States of America) noted that the code of conduct relating to transnational corporations had not yet been approved and that it was questionable whether significant progress would be made during the biennium 1992-1993. His delegation therefore felt that perhaps the time had come to delete the subprogramme in its entirety. His delegation, moreover, did not believe that the Centre on Transnational Corporations should allocate its limited resources to activities relating to the environment, under subprogramme 2. Such activities were more appropriately carried out by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

30. His delegation questioned the usefulness of the large number of publications of all types envisaged during the biennium and wished to know whether any of them would be devoted to explaining some of the positive contributions transnational corporations could make. In the past, too much of the Centre's work had been focused on the perceived negative impact of transnational corporations on national economies. Since transnational corporations were the major sources of private investment capital in the world, the work of the Centre might have adversely affected the development of many countries throughout the world. He wondered whether any United Nations department had considered that question. The United States welcomed foreign investment in its economy; that investment had increased substantially in recent years, a development which might in part be related to the poor investment climate that the Centre had helped to create in a number of other countries.

31. His delegation had difficulty with the various upgradings proposed for the Centre and, in particular, saw no need for the upgrading of the post of Chief of the Accounting Unit, who also served as Secretary of the Intergovernmental Working Group of Experts on International Standards of

(Mr. Bennett, United States)

Accounting and Reporting. It would appreciate details to substantiate the claim that the Centre's work in that area had expanded and an explanation as to how that expansion had increased the workload of the post.

32. His delegation questioned the level of staff travel required under the section and asked for details regarding the travel undertaken by each of the six senior-level staff members of the Centre during 1990, specifying the number of trips each had made and the destinations. With regard to the statement in paragraph 20.4 of the Advisory Committee's report that not all the joint units at the regional commissions were performing satisfactorily, he said his delegation was surprised that the Secretariat would provide such a candid assessment of the performance of any United Nations programme and wished to know the basis for that conclusion. His delegation believed that all the joint units, with perhaps the exception of the ECLAC joint unit, should be abolished.

33. Mr. TEIRLINCK (Belgium) said his delegation felt that the question of the reclassification of posts should be dealt with in a global manner. However, it had difficulty with the Advisory Committee's view, in paragraph 20.5 of its report, that the proposed reclassification of the post of Managing Editor, CTC Reporter Magazine, should not be accepted. He recalled the view expressed by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee that the requirement that the General Assembly must approve all reclassifications should perhaps be re-evaluated (A/C.5/46/SR.5, para. 21). He was glad that the Committee had decided to refer the question to informal consultations and asked whether the methodology approved by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) for distinguishing between Professional level and General Service level work (A/35/30, paras. 259-262) had been applied in the case under consideration. If the methodology had become obsolete, the Committee should consider the question of job classification without delay so as to avoid lengthy discussions in the future. He asked for clarification about the procedures referred to by the Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division.

34. The Advisory Committee had not explained why it was recommending that the General Service post should not be reclassified; his delegation would appreciate additional information. It noted that it was the only case in which the Advisory Committee was opposed to a request for the reclassification of a General Service post to the Professional level. His delegation supported the Secretary-General's proposal.

35. Mr. BELHAJ (Tunisia) said that his delegation would appreciate information about the studies and reports prepared by outside consultants for the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations. He asked whether it was true that reports prepared by consultants were sometimes rewritten by staff members of the Centre; if that were so, he questioned the value of the large sums allocated for hiring consultants, particularly in view of the high quality of the Centre's staff. He also requested further details regarding the $400,000 requested for staff travel costs.

(Mr. Belhaj, Tunisia)

36. The question of the reclassification of posts needed to be considered globally. His delegation requested information about the geographical distribution of the Centre's consultants and how many of them were retired staff members who had been brought back.

37. Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda) said that the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations was very important to his delegation. In its view, the Centre was not hostile to transnational corporations, but was trying to improve the atmosphere in which they operated by eliminating the undesirable aspects of capitalism. He agreed with the priorities accorded within the programme and, in particular, supported subprogramme 3. Developing countries greatly valued the assistance they were given, and the Centre had helped Uganda to draw up a market-friendly investment code. In connection with paragraph 20.4 of the Advisory Committee's report, his delegation was concerned about the statement that not all the joint units at the regional commissions were performing satisfactorily. It felt that the regional commissions should be strengthened so that they could provide more assistance to countries. It supported the proposed reclassification of posts, especially that of Managing Editor, CTC Reporter Magazine; that magazine had been very useful in disseminating information.

38. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the Secretary-General did not have the authority to delete the subprogramme on the code of conduct relating to transnational corporations, as suggested by the United States representative; only the General Assembly could take such action. The medium-term plan had been approved by consensus, and that had included consensus on section 20. Clearly, the section reflected changes in tone and orientation resulting from the evolution of events and ideas, so that there could not be total continuity with previous budgets.

39. It would be possible, in an informal context, to provide a breakdown of travel expenses in 1990, indicating the main reasons for travel, but it would not be possible to go further than that.

40. On the question of consultants, he recalled that it had been agreed that a relatively large number of consultants was needed by the Centre because of the small number of staff members. That situation continued to be reflected in the 1992-1993 budget. The information requested by the representative of Tunisia on the geographical origin of the Centre's consultants would be made available.

41. When he had stated that the proper procedures had been followed in respect of the requests for reclassification, he had been referring to the submission of job descriptions to OHRM and had not meant that the methodology established by ICSC had been followed exactly. He could only assume that the relevant services of the United Nations had done their work in that respect.

42. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), referring to the comments that had been made on the question of reclassification, said he had noted at the outset that the Advisory Committee had felt that at the current stage it was not necessary to reclassify the post of Chief, Environmental Unit, from the P-4 to the P-5 level. The Advisory Committee had not been provided with compelling justification regarding a change in the nature of the work of the Unit; after the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development it would be possible to assess the need for a reclassification.

43. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the recommendation of CPC on section 20, as contained in paragraph 285 of its report (A/46/16).

44. It was so decided.

45. The recommendation of the Advisory Committee for an appropriation in the amount of $12,841,700 under section 20 for the biennium 1992-1993 was approved in first reading, on the understanding that the issues raised in connection with section 20 would be considered in informal consultations and any necessary adjustments made.

Section 21: Social development and humanitarian affairs

46. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that there had been two requests to the Secretariat for reports related to section 21. The first, a request for a report on the strengthening of the United Nations Office at Vienna had been prompted by the decision of the General Assembly in 1990 to create a post at the Under-Secretary-General level for the International Drug Control Programme. The report was still under preparation and should be available the following week, when it would be submitted through the Advisory Committee. The second, a report on the financing of autonomous institutes in the crime prevention area would be made available to the Third Committee in time for that Committee's consideration of the item.

47. Ms. BERENGUER (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination) said that both in CPC and in the general debate in the Fifth Committee the issue of strengthening the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs had been raised. In CPC, some delegations had expressed support for Economic and Social Council resolution 1991/16, in which the Secretary-General had been requested to strengthen and rationalize the resources of the Centre. CPC had, however, finally recommended approval of the programme narrative of the section as it stood and its report had been approved by the Economic and Social Council. CPC had also taken note of the assurances given by the Secretary-General to the Third Committee regarding the situation of autonomous institutes, especially the African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders.

48. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) agreed that United Nations programmes relating to social development and humanitarian affairs might not be sufficiently funded. Given the tight budgetary constraints, however, sources other than regular budget funding should be sought. In that regard, his delegation noted that extrabudgetary resources accounted for about 30 per cent of total anticipated resources under section 21 and would like to know what steps the Secretariat had taken to encourage greater voluntary support for the programmed activities. Substantial governmental and non-governmental resources could be found if the Secretariat made a concerted attempt to raise them.

49. His delegation was particularly concerned that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was expected to provide only $200,000 for operational projects carried out under section 21. Since UNDP spent over $800 million annually on development projects, the amount allocated to the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs was very low. The General Assembly should urge the Governing Council of UNDP to give greater attention to funding social programmes executed by the United Nations.

50. Lastly, his delegation believed that the Secretary-General should consider the desirability of relocating social programmes to New York, in view of the close link between the economic and social aspects of development.

51. Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda) said that his delegation was concerned not so much with whether the social programmes should be administered from New York or Vienna as with the tendency to neglect activities in the field and the need to strengthen regional centres. It was disappointed, moreover, that the report on the financing of autonomous institutes had not yet been made available, and regretted the piecemeal approach to strengthening activities under section 21. The same zeal did not appear to have been shown for economic as for social issues. In that regard, it was essential to maintain an overall balance.

52. Ms. ERKISSON FOGH (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that she shared the concerns raised by other delegations that the comparatively limited resources available to the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs might hamper its ability to fulfil its mandates and carry out its activities in the social and related fields and, not least, for the advancement of women. The trend towards increasing the funding of United Nations activities from extrabudgetary resources could have negative effects. A case in point was subprogramme 3 (Integration of disabled persons in development) under section 21B, which was to a great extent dependent on extrabudgetary resources. Likewise, the activities related to the implementation of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons were heavily dependent on voluntary funds. The Nordic countries wondered whether the financing arrangements for programmes concerning disabled persons were to be understood as reflecting a lower priority.

(Ms. Erkisson Fogh, Sweden)

53. Another issue of particular concern to the Nordic delegations was that of preparations for the 1995 World Conference on Women. They were not convinced that the non-recurrent resource growth of $463,100 shown in paragraph 21.34 of the proposed programme budget would be adequate for that purpose.

54. Mr. DINU (Romania) said he was puzzled to note that no recommendations had been made in response to the request contained in Economic and Social Council resolution 1991/16, of which his country had been a sponsor. More resources should be made available to the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, in particular to prepare for the 1995 World Conference on Women and to support the activities of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. His delegation agreed with the Advisory Committee that there was sufficient justification for the conversion of four temporary posts to established posts in the crime prevention and criminal justice area of the Centre (A/46/7, para. 21.5) and would favour the provision of additional posts and resources to ensure that mandated activities could be carried out effectively. Lastly, further possibilities should be explored to secure increased extrabudgetary funding.

55. Mr. TANG Guangting (China) said that his delegation shared the concerns already expressed by previous speakers regarding the low rate of growth and inadequate resources proposed for section 21, and the need for compliance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1991/16. Lack of resources particularly affected activities relating to the advancement of women. In that regard, he drew attention to paragraph 28 of the draft resolution on the advancement of women recently adopted by the Third Committee (A/C.3/46/L.15), which requested the Fifth Committee to determine the appropriate resource levels to ensure adequate support for the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and, especially, for the preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women. The non-recurrent resource requirements for temporary assistance given in paragraph 21.34 of the proposed programme budget represented only half of what had been indicated in the original statement of programme budget implications and his delegation would welcome clarification from the Secretariat as to whether the proposed resources would actually meet the needs of the Centre.

56. Mr. BAZAN (Chile) said that his delegation attached great importance to the activities under section 21. The anticipated rate of real growth and the level of resources under that section appeared all the more inadequate in view of the decrease in extrabudgetary funding. Like other speakers, he wished to stress the need to strengthen and rationalize the resources of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and he hoped that the Secretariat would make specific recommendations in that regard.

57. Ms. Goicochea Estenoz (Cuba), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

58. Ms. ROTHEISER (Austria) said that her country was very interested in the questions of social development and humanitarian affairs, as evidenced by its hosting of United Nations units dealing with those issues. Her delegation had studied with great care the Secretary-General's proposals under section 21, for which regular budget resources were relatively limited in comparison with other expenditure sections. The decrease in extrabudgetary resources was regrettable, but the section still depended on voluntary contributions for more than a quarter of its resources. In that context, her delegation found it especially problematic that extrabudgetary resources were needed for substantive activities.

59. The decrease in extrabudgetary resources had resulted in a net reduction of six posts and her delegation would like to know what work had been attached to those posts and whether it had been mandated by the General Assembly. If so, her delegation believed that the redeployment of the extrabudgetary Professional post from the crime prevention area should be offset by the establishment of a regular budget post, as it could not agree to any mandates of the General Assembly not being implemented. Her delegation also noted that the activities relating to a number of ad hoc expert groups were to be financed from voluntary contributions. If such funding was not secured, those expert groups might cease to exist and it would thus be preferable to put those activities on a sound financial basis and fund them from the regular budget.

60. Given the increasing workload of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, her delegation wondered how all the proposed activities could be carried out with a reduction in extrabudgetary posts and a stagnation in resources. "Stagnation" appeared to be the appropriate term, since it was hard to understand how a positive 1 per cent rate of real growth was possible when table 21.6 of the proposed programme budget showed that resources for global social issues and policies had been reduced by nearly half in nominal terms, from almost $5.6 million in the previous budget appropriations to less than $3.5 million for 1992-1993.

61. With regard to the temporary assistance requirements indicated in paragraph 21.34 of the proposed programme budget, the representative of China had already pointed out that the level of resources proposed by the Secretary-General was less than had originally been envisaged in the statement of programme budget implications submitted to the Economic and Social Council (E/1990/25/Add.1). Her delegation wondered how preparations could be made for the 1995 World Conference on Women with resources that were insufficient and far less than those available, for example, to the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs for the preparation of a major conference on population. It would also like to know how many posts would be assigned for the servicing of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

62. With regard to the proposed conversion of four temporary posts to established posts in the crime prevention and criminal justice area, her delegation supported the proposal of the Secretary-General and its endorsement by the Advisory Committee.

(Ms. Rotheiser, Austria)

63. Her delegation was disappointed that the Secretary-General had not submitted additional recommendations to strengthen and rationalize the resources of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, as requested by the Economic and Social Council in resolution 1991/16 and by the Third Committee, whose Chairman had addressed a letter in that regard to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee. She was nevertheless confident that the outstanding reports relating to social development and humanitarian affairs would be issued in due course. Although the reductions proposed by the Advisory Committee for section 21 were small, they might have a disproportionate negative impact on the functioning of the Centre and were at variance with the aforementioned resolution. Her delegation could not, therefore, support those reductions.

64. Lastly, she wished to point out that the United States representative's proposal regarding the desirability of transferring social units to New York was contrary to the relevant decisions of the General Assembly, which stated that the United Nations Office at Vienna was the nucleus for social and humanitarian affairs. Given the scarce resources and the lack of office space, as well as the high rental costs in New York, her delegation believed that it would be cheaper to keep those units at Vienna, where sufficient office space was provided free of charge.

65. Mr. ELDEEB (Egypt) agreed with the representative of Austria on the need for increased support for the activities programmed under section 21. The new world order emerging at the end of the cold war was creating new priorities but the human element would remain central to all activities undertaken by the international community. The growing importance of the issues covered by the section under consideration entailed an expansion of the functions of the bodies dealing with them. His delegation hoped that the Fifth Committee would approve the Secretary-General's estimates without reduction. It also associated itself with other delegations in stressing the relevance of Economic and Social Council resolution 1991/16, which requested the Secretary-General to add specific recommendations on how to strengthen and rationalize the resources of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. The activities under section 21 should reflect a balanced commitment with regard to development in all countries in accordance with the principle of universality that inspired the Organization.

66. Mr. LAOUARI (Algeria) supported the view expressed by previous speakers regarding the need to provide the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs with the means not only to prepare for the 1995 World Conference on Women but also to carry out its regular activities. The low level of resources proposed for the Centre could have a negative impact on its performance and it was essential to ensure compliance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1991/16. Lastly, his delegation endorsed the comment made by the representative of Uganda regarding the strengthening of regional centres.

67. Miss SHITAKHA (Kenya) said that many of her delegation's concerns had already been voiced. It fully supported the statement made by the representative of Austria; Kenya, too, was very concerned over the relatively small 1 per cent growth rate. A broader resource base should be sought for section 21, particularly in view of the decrease in extrabudgetary funding. Her delegation agreed with the representative of Uganda on the need to support the work of both the Centre and the regional offices. Like other delegations, it thought that the Centre did not have sufficient financial and personnel resources to prepare for the 1995 World Conference on Women effectively.

68. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) said that he had not proposed the transfer of social programmes to New York, but had only suggested that the Secretary-General should consider the desirability of such a transfer in view of the close link between the economic and social aspects of development. As for the lower cost of keeping the Centre at Vienna, where its offices were rent-free, he said that, if all United Nations activities could be housed in the Secretariat building in New York, there would be no need to pay rent anywhere. However, that possibility was precluded by the rapid growth of the Secretariat. Also, in view of the decision of the General Assembly to keep several global and social development posts in New York instead of transferring them to Vienna, he would like to receive confirmation from the Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division that the lower salary cost of New York posts was reflected in the budget.

69. With respect to voluntary contributions, he said that extrabudgetary funding should not be viewed in a negative light. Worthwhile programmes that enjoyed the confidence of Member States would get support. Furthermore, arguing that extrabudgetary funding was undesirable might encourage Governments to reduce the amount of such contributions.

70. In subprogramme 3 under section 21A, one of the activities listed under Information material and services was the preparation of wall charts and posters on the International Year of the Family. Similarly, in subprogramme 2 under section 21B, reference was made to the production of wall charts on the average pension received by people 60 years old and above. His delegation would like to know how much those activities would cost. In its view, they were of a marginal and symbolic nature and should not be funded in the current financial climate.

71. Mr. OSELLA (Argentina) asked what had been and what would be done to comply with Economic and Social Council resolution 1991/16.

72. Mr. WORONIECKI (Poland) said that, as his delegation had stated before on many occasions, it was necessary to create more links between economic and social affairs, in the context of both the Centre's activities and the activities of the United Nations system as a whole. In many vital areas such as the environment, it was necessary to consider the social impact of economic conditions; that was particularly evident in the countries in transition including his own. Thanks to the extrabudgetary resources provided by the

(Mr. Woroniecki, Poland)

Government of Finland, a very interesting seminar on that topic would be held at Helsinki early in 1992.

73. His delegation stressed the importance of the advancement of women, the World Conference on Women and preparations for the International Year of the Family. Those activities deserved more extrabudgetary support, as well as adequate funding from the regular budet. Reiterating his delegation's support for the idea of a social development summit, which had been discussed in the plenary Assembly, he said that, if the General Assembly were to decide to hold such a summit, that decision would have to be reflected in the revisions of the programme budget. Finally, despite the great importance which his delegation attached to the Vienna Centre as a focus on United Nations activites in the social sector, he wished to emphasize the need to remain faithful to the objectives set by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, when considering the relevant programmes.

74. Mr. BIRAUD (France) wished to stress his country's concern, in the light of increasingly difficult economic conditions, over the growing risk of the marginalization of entire social groups, particularly those for which the Centre was responsible. It shared the reservations of other delegations regarding the ability of the small staff in Vienna to prepare for the 1995 World Conference on Women, even with a very long lead time. The Conference should be taken very seriously for a number of reasons, in particular, its potential economic repercussions, given the important role of women in many economies. He hoped that the concerns that had been voiced during the debate on section 21 would lead to practical action during the informal consultations on the proposed appropriations.

75. Mr. RAE (India) said that his delegation attached great importance to the work of the Centre. It noted the decline in extrabudgetary resources and thought that the real rate of growth from regular budget funding was not sufficient. The Centre should be allocated all necessary financial and personnel resources. In that regard, his delegation endorsed the comments made regarding the need to provide adequate funding for the preparations for the World Conference on Women.

76. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that there were two reasons for the decline in estimated extrabudgetary expenditures for the biennium 1992-1993 implied in table 21.1. The first was the closure of the Trust Fund for Monitoring and Review and Appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, which had accounted for over $800,000 for the biennium 1990-1991. It had been replaced by the Trust Fund for the Preparatory Activities for the 1995 World Conference on Women, expenditures for which were now estimated at $200,000 for the biennium 1992-1993. That decrease was absolutely normal and did not in any way reflect a decline in the interest of Member States in the advancement of women. Nevertheless, the Secretariat would make every effort to attract additional contributions. In contrast, the lower estimates for the Voluntary

(Mr. Baudot)

Fund for the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, which would end in 1992, were a true cause for concern, especially in the light of the extremely important role of the United Nations in that area. Generous contributions had, however, been made, and he hoped that the Secretariat's projections would prove too pessimistic. In all other areas, voluntary contributions were expected to increase.

77. The representative of Austria was correct in noting a net decrease in the number of posts funded from extrabudgetary resources. That decline was due to the Centre's redefinition of the proper use of resources, as a result of which it would seek to finance certain posts from grants and other sources.

78. With respect to the concerns voiced about the implementation of Economic and Social Council resolution 1991/16, he said that, as the Secretary-General had observed in the relevant statement of programme budget implications, the resolution could have no financial implications; the budget proposal had already been prepared and it was therefore impossible to implement the operative paragraph for the biennium 1992-1993.

79. It was up to the Committee to decide on the level of resources required for the preparations for the 1995 World Conference on Women. Since the conference would not take place until 1995, it was impossible to allocate all the resources needed to prepare for it during the biennium 1992-1993. If, for example, the General Assembly were to decide to hold a conference in 10 years' time, he wondered whether the Secretariat should begin allocating resources for it immediately. Moreover, given the exceptionally long period available for preparations, it was difficult to compare that Conference with others. He would, however, look into the possibility of drawing up a comparison of resources spent on the preparation of various conferences.

80. Table 21.3 gave the impression that appropriations for activities under the programme on global social issues and policies had been cut. That was due to the transfer of some of those activities to the programme on the integration of social groups. There was no actual decline in resources.

81. In response to the query by the United States representative, he said that, although the global and social development posts in question had originally been costed at Vienna prices, they had subsequently been recosted at New York prices following the decision of the General Assembly. He would very much like to comment on the question raised by the representative of Poland concerning the link between economic and social affairs, but it was not his place to do so. Finally, regarding the proposed social development summit, he understood that the possibility was still being explored informally and that the Secretary-General would submit a report to the Economic and Social Council in 1992. Should the Council endorse the summit, the Secretary-General would submit a statement of programme budget implications to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session, in the context of the revision of budget estimates.

82. Ms. BERENGUER (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination) said that the Economic and Social Council had already endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of CPC on the proposed programme budget. It was therefore safe to presume that, like CPC, the Council was satisfied with the programme narrative of section 21.

83. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the conclusions and recommendations of CPC on section 21, as contained in paragraphs 294 and 295 of its report (A/46/16).

84. It was so decided.

85. The recommendation of the Advisory Committee for an appropriation in the amount of $13,942,800 under section 21 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 was approved in first reading, on the understanding that the issues raised in connection with section 21 would be considered in informal consultations and any necessary adjustments made.

86. Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda), speaking in explanation of his position after the decision, said he wished to emphasize the provisional nature of his delegation's approval pending the submission by the Secretary-General of the report requested in General Assembly decision 45/428 and the outcome of the Paris meeting on the criminal justice programme.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.